



Simon Says 'Charity begins in your home'

The **Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)** and the Simon Communities of Ireland have launched the seventh annual **RIAI Simon Open Door Weekend**. From today, people in Kilkenny can log on to www.simonopendoor.ie to book a one-hour consultation with the local **RIAI** architect of their choice in return for a 50 donation to the Simon Communities of Ireland. All architects give their time for free and every cent raised goes directly to the charity. Over a thousand people took part in the initiative last year and almost 250,000 has been raised to date. This year, the Simon Open Door will take place over Saturday and Sunday, 7th and 8th May 2011.

One of the themes of this year's campaign is sustainability and low cost changes that will help people to make their house a home while also reducing their energy bills. The Simon Open Door Weekend provides people in Kilkenny with an opportunity to change the way they look at their home and see if they are using their space in the smartest and greenest way. Improving the energy efficiency of a home does not have to be costly and the Simon Open Door architects will be giving advice on small improvements that can deliver a big difference in terms of both energy usage and costs.

Speaking at the launch was Mary Lee Rhodes, Chairperson, Simon Communities of Ireland. She said, "The current economic crisis is impacting on us all, but most heavily on those the margins of our society; people who are homeless, people who are at risk of homelessness and people with many related needs. Simon Community is about believing in people; believing in the people who turn to the eight local Simon communities around the country every day, believing in the thousands of volunteers and Simon supporters, and believing that with the appropriate housing, care

and support people can and do leave homelessness behind. Now, more than ever, we need the support of the public."



Pictured at the launch of the RIAI Simon Open Door Weekend is Andrew Blanker, age 2.